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5 November 1974

Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft, USAF
Deputy Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Brent:

U. S. News & World Report asked me for a Q&A interview.
It seemed a good chance to get some of our problems clearly stated.
Herewith the result in two parts. The first is the role of intelligence
and the Agency (you will note that I take full responsibility for covert
action). R3

The second part is an oral discussion of substantive assessments
in which I see no particular intelligence problem. However,
I certainly do not want to get crosswise with any policy questions or
create troubles on that line.

Could you take a look at these and give me your reactions.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bill

W. E. Colby
Director

Attachment

P. S. Note the deadline.

/s/ Bill

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INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM E. COLBY
DIRECTOR, CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Washington, D. C.
October 31, 1974

"U.S. News & World Report"

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Q Mr. Colby, many people around the world question the moral right of the CIA to spy on friendly countries, as opposed to countries that are potential enemies of the U.S.

How do you answer that?

A It comes ~~right~~ down to the concept of state sovereignty and the right of a country to protect itself, That includes

the right to carry out such operations in the world as are believed necessary for self-protection. I think that moralists over the years have accepted some degree of clandestine work as part of the normal relationship between states. In any case, is spying any less moral than developing ^{great} weapons systems, or many of the other things that nations do in their self-interest?

Q How do you decide whether to operate in a friendly, or neutral, country?

A The decision concerning any intelligence operation is determined by the answer to four questions: What is the

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First, it's hard to distinguish so clearly between friends and potential enemies as over our history a number of countries have been both. But basically the question

which have long been recognized as part of international relations.

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importance to our nation of the intelligence result

~~benefit~~ being sought? What is the risk of exposure? What

is the impact of exposure? And how much does it cost?

most open societies,
In ~~certain situations~~, you don't have to conduct clan-

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importance to our nation of the intelligence result

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~~benefit~~ being sought? What is the risk of exposure? What

would be is the impact of exposure? And how much does it cost?

most open societies,
In ~~certain situations~~, you don't have to conduct clan-

destine operations to get ~~the~~ information you are after

would be So you're foolish if you run the risks and absorb the costs

of ~~entering~~ a clandestine mission. Obviously, in a friendly

country the adverse impact of exposure ~~is going to~~ ^{would} be very

great. So that is a very negative factor. But there will

be ~~some~~ situations in some parts of the world where a well-

conceived, low-risk operation is necessary to get ~~at some~~ ^{some}

information which could be ~~thing~~ terribly important to us,

Q What about covert operations like the one the CIA con-

ducted in Chile before the overthrow of the Allende regime?

A Again, it's a matter of the United States taking a de-

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cision that a certain course of action is important in the
 best interest of ^{our} this country, and friendly elements in another one.
 There have been exposures
 before. The ^{U-2} ~~Bay of Pigs~~ operation against Cuba, of course,
 is a notable example.

Q Do you, as the Director of the CIA, decide that a covert
 operation such as against Chile should be conducted?

A ~~No~~, these decisions are very carefully structured. The
 authority for these ⁱⁿ ~~operations~~ stems from the National
 Security Act. This ^{authorizes} ~~says that~~ the CIA ^{to} ~~will~~ carry out such
 other functions and duties ^{related to foreign} ~~beyond the gathering of in-~~
 telligence ~~as~~ as the National Security Council may direct
~~from time to time.~~

Furthermore, we explain to ^{our} congressional ^{oversight} subcommittees in general
 how we ^{propose to} use the funds that are appropriated annually for the
 CIA. We ^{provide the most sensitive information and} have no secrets as far as these subcommittees are
 concerned. We ~~answer everything that they ask~~ ^{and I have the obligation to tell them things} I don't
 describe each operation but if a member of ^{these} subcommittees
^{necessarily} describe each operation but if a member of a subcommittee

they would not have to ask about.

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asks what we are doing in any particular country I'll give
full and
him a fair picture.

Q Who actually makes the decision that a covert operation
should be undertaken?

A The actual operation is approved by a ~~policy~~
of the National Security Council -- the Forty Committee.

high level policy
If there is concern about the situation in some country,
in CIA
we ~~could~~ look at it and see what we ~~could~~ *might* do that would help
implement national policy. Then we go up to the National

Security Council and say, "Here is what we think we can do
to carry out *the* a general policy of ~~defending ourselves and~~

~~improving our position~~ with regard to that country." If

the
~~our~~ proposal is approved, we go ahead and carry it out.

I'm not suggesting that ~~the~~ CIA ~~in any way~~ has been pushed
or shoved *to* in undertaking actions of this sort; *it's part of our job*

Q Is clandestine activity the major element in CIA activity
-- even in these days of detente?

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A To ~~get the~~ answer to that question, we have to stand back and examine what ^{the} United States intelligence includes.

~~It includes what is called "the Community"~~ ^{It} embracing ^{es} the CIA,

^{the} National Security Agency, the intelligence services of the Army, Navy and Air Force,

^{the} Defense Intelligence Agency, the FBI, intelligence units

in State, Treasury and the Atomic Energy Commission ^{and} All of these agencies collaborate on the intelligence job.

After all, intelligence consists essentially of the collection of information -- by overt ^{technical and clandestine} and covert means -- the assess-

ment of all this information and deriving conclusions and judgments about the world ^{what is going on or is likely to go on in} from these assessments.

In 1971, President Nixon said that the Director of Central Intelligence should take a leadership role in this whole effort. And I've tried to do this. Essentially I have four jobs.

One of my jobs is to be head of the intelligence "community." ^{Apart from the CIA,} I don't have ^{all} authority over these ^{other} agencies

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but I do have certain influence on them because of my responsibility to report on what they are doing ~~and other powers I have.~~

A second job is ~~the running of the Agency~~ the CIA.

Third, I have to be substantively informed about situations *provide briefings, information and assessments to* around the world so that I can ~~participate in~~ National *th*

~~Security Council meetings.~~ Fourth is the job of acting as a kind of public spokesman and handling problems like our recent troubles.

Now, to get back to your question: By reason of the way *most of which is clandestine* the "community" is structured, clandestine activity does *collection rather than covert political or similar action,* represent a considerable percentage of CIA's activity.

it But if you measure ~~that~~ against the whole of the intelligence "community," it's a rather small percentage of the total "community" effort.

Q Has detente changed the character of your work or reduced the need for clandestine intelligence?

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of mutual respect for each other so that our differences can be negotiated about rather than fought over.

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A I wish it would. If you get to the logical end of detente then ~~logically~~ we would have established a relationship of ~~mutual trust and collaboration in the world with~~ the Soviet Union. This, in turn, ^{sh} would encourage the Soviets ~~to believe~~ ~~and convince them~~ that they ought to be more open with their information. But that's not the situation now.

~~Unfortunately~~ today the Soviet attaches can go to almost any newsstand in this country, pick up a copy of a technical ^{or space} aviation magazine and from it learn a vast amount of detail about our weapons system. Unfortunately we have to spend hundreds of millions of dollars to get ^{comparable} ~~that kind of~~ information about the Soviet Union. We couldn't ~~satisfactorily~~ ^{to Congress and the nation} fulfill our responsibilities unless we did spend those millions of dollars ~~on clandestine gathering of useful~~ ^{that} information.

Q There is growing pressure for the CIA to restrict itself to the collection of foreign intelligence such as you've

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just described, and abandon your covert operations -- that is, aiming at the overthrow of governments. How do you react to that idea?

Given the state of the world today, the Capitol
 A ~~The nation~~ would not collapse if the CIA tonight were not permitted to conduct ^{such} covert operations any longer. In

fact, ~~because of a change in policy over the years~~, we do considerably less of these than we did during the worldwide confrontation with the Soviets and the expansionist drive of the Communists in the 1950s. And we do considerably

less than during the period in the '60s when we were dealing

in a number of countries. Changes in the world situation
 with Communist insurgency and subversion. ~~The detente has~~
and our national policies have decreased such activities,
~~decreased the problem. Consequently we don't do very much.~~

We ~~But~~ *we* still do some; ~~but~~ *of this type* covert actions are a very small percentage of our total effort at the moment.

Q. Why is it needed at all?

A ~~I think~~ *few* there are a ~~number~~ of situations where a little discreet help to a few friends of the United States or a

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And times change. ^{it be faced with}
a real need for early quiet influence against
a rising threat which otherwise we might
have no alternative than to meet by force later.
We no longer wait & send Martin to such situations
little help to a few people espousing a certain policy or
^{foreign}
program in a ~~certain~~ country can enable us to influence a
local situation in a way that may avert a greater crisis in
the future. ^{this flexible} So I think the tool is important to preserve
so that we can use it if we have to.

Q Do you assume that undercover agents from friendly
countries are operating in the United States?

^{Certainly,}
A ~~Sure~~, I do. The ~~fact is that the~~ ^{identified} FBI has ~~captured~~ a
number in the past. You have to recognize that in dealing
with a lot of countries around the world it's accepted that
we all engage in ~~this kind of~~ ^{the} clandestine gathering of in-
telligence. Nobody gets emotional about it. It's been go-
ing on since Moses sent a man from each tribe to spy out
the Land of Canaan.

Q There has been some comment that budget cutbacks have

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hurt intelligence gathering to the point where Secretary of State Kissinger goes into talks with the Russians with inadequate information. Is there any truth in that?

A We obviously are suffering budgetary pressures from the inflation ~~problem~~. I think we are still giving a very good intelligence product to our Government. I have great confidence in it. There have been some ^{projects} ~~things~~ that we have turned down because they were totally out of reach ^{financially.} ~~in terms~~

~~of financial commitments involved.~~ These have been in the category of things that would have ~~really~~ made our intelligence more complete but I don't think that ^{we have yet} ~~it has~~ dropped below a danger line ~~at this point.~~ I don't think it has imperiled our ability to negotiate ~~at the moment.~~

However, we do have a problem coming up because of the inflationary squeeze ^{lock} ~~as we project~~ ahead a few years. We've tried to respond to this by focusing our effort on the more important things and dropping off the thing^s that we may have

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needed in a different world.

Q Where have you been able to cut back?

A Luckily, today we are not required to maintain the scale of effort that we did in ~~past times~~ in Southeast Asia, for example. Our problems in some of the other parts of the world are ~~really a lot~~ more manageable than they were when we were deeply concerned about ~~the situation in~~ a large number of countries that were under pressure of Communist subversion or insurgency. The impact on the world balance ^{then} could have been quite substantially ~~affected~~ if any one country had made a ~~very substantial~~ change in political direction.

Today, I think the world balance is a little more stable, ^{at least} with respect to major military threats to our country.

The real challenge for intelligence is to provide the kind of information that enables us to negotiate and enables us to anticipate future developments in ~~a lot of~~ countries that would be of great importance to us. Obviously, the subject of economics has become ^{more} important in the past few

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years. [Twenty years ago -- even 10 years ago -- this was

~~largely handled on the side as not much of an intelligence~~

problem. [Terrorism has become a ~~problem for us~~ ^{threat to the} The nar-

cotics problem has grown in the past few years. But other

situations correspondingly have declined and we've been able

to compensate.

Q Mr. Colby, the CIA has been widely criticized for its
involvement in Watergate --

A The CIA did two wrong things in the Watergate affair.

The first was providing Howard Hunt paraphernalia for use

in his work for the White House. The second was ~~making~~ ^{providing}

~~available to~~ White House employees the psychological profile

of Daniel Ellsberg. They weren't earthshaking ~~errors~~ ^{errors}, but

they were wrong. We ~~know we~~ ^{they} shouldn't have done ~~it~~ ^{it} and we

have told our employees that we won't do ~~it~~ ^{them} again.

Q If someone called today from the White House and asked

the CIA to do something improper, what could you do about it?

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(Mr. Colby: Please supply date.)

A Well, that's very clear. In my confirmation hearing

on July 2^d last year,

I said that if I was ordered to do some-

thing improper, ~~beyond my authority~~, I would ~~resign~~. That's

object and quit if necessary

easy. Also our employees have been instructed that if there

have

is any question ~~at all~~ about anything that they are being

asked to do they are supposed to come to me. My contention

is that if anybody really tried to misuse the CIA at this

future, I think

~~point~~ the organization would explode from inside. It really

would. And that's good because it's the ~~only~~ *best* protection

we have against this kind of problem.

Q Do you operate at all inside the United States?

We have no internal security functions or police or

A ~~We are forbidden by law to engage in any activities af-~~

law enforcement powers.

~~fecting the internal security of this country. That's pretty~~

It is

clear that our function is only foreign intelligence.

Now what do we do inside the United States? We have

a large building up on the Potomac River. ~~We obviously~~ *with*

~~have~~ a lot of employees there. In order to know something

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about them before we hire them, we conduct security investigations. We also make contracts with people around the country to supply us with things that we can use in our activities abroad. And we ^{have} ~~sign~~ contracts for research projects so that we can expand the base of our knowledge.

We have a service in our Agency that ~~goes around and~~ talks to American ^s ~~citizens~~ who may have knowledge of some foreign situation that they are willing to share with their Government. We identify ourselves as representatives of the CIA and we assure these Americans that they will be protected as a source, ^{and we will do so.} But we don't pay them and we don't conduct ^{clandestine} operations to obtain ^{such} ~~this kind of~~ intelligence ~~in the~~ ^{from Americans.} ~~United States except to the extent that it is provided voluntarily.~~

We ~~also~~ have some support structures in this country for our work abroad. ~~We have business and other relationships that make it possible for some of our people abroad~~

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~~to appear to belong to something else rather than the CIA.~~

We also collect foreign intelligence from foreigners in America. This is intelligence about foreign countries and has nothing to do with protecting the internal security of this country against those foreigners. That is the job of

the FBI, with which we have a clear understanding and good cooperation as to our respective functions.

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Q A number of Congressmen complain that there is no effective control over the CIA. Is there any reason why your agency shouldn't be subjected to tighter supervision?

A I think we have responded to Congress's right and desire to know about the details of our activities over the years in the form that Congress itself has arranged. Now, the arrangements we have with our oversight committee^s in Congress ^{are} a lot more intense today than in past years. Twenty years ago all of this was considered a very secret affair.

Congress is demanding. We answer
Today ~~it's~~ much more open. That's the way Congress wants it and we are responding. *If we didn't, we'd be in real trouble.*

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*any question
our
oversight
committees
ask, ~~be~~ and
I must
volunteer to
them matters they
might not know to ask
about.*

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Q Mr. Colby, do you feel the effectiveness of the CIA is impaired by all the publicity you've been getting lately about secret operations?

A Obviously this has raised questions among some of our foreign friends about the degree to which we can keep secrets. Leading officials of foreign governments ~~who are concerned about this~~ have brought it up in discussions with me. ~~We have had some~~ Individuals who have worked with us in various parts of the world ~~who~~ have indicated a disinclination to work with us any longer because of the very real dangers to them of exposure.

In that respect, we have been hurt, ~~a little~~. But Frankly, I like the way our society runs. I think it is perhaps unique that the chief of intelligence has to be exposed, as

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he is in America. But I think America gains a great deal

of strength from ~~it~~ this, even though it's a big change from traditional intelligence secrecy.

Q How do ~~these~~ leaks affect morale at your agency?

A You have to draw a distinction between leaks that lead

to criticism of our programs and policies and leaks that

expose our people. I think that we can and should stand

up to the criticism. But ~~the tendency to expose~~ ^{just} our people

can be very difficult and also very dangerous. You will

recall Mr. Mittrione, who was killed in Uruguay. Dan Mittrione,

a U.S. police official assigned to train police in Uruguay,

was kidnaped and killed by the Tupamaro guerrillas on August

10, 1970.⁷ He was murdered -- that's the only word for it.

He was alleged to have been a CIA officer, which he was not.

I think it is reckless to go around naming people as being

identified with the CIA.

Q Why can't you prevent former CIA officials from publish-

ing books that reveal secrets of your agency and the names

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of secret agents?

A There are criminal penalties for people who reveal income-tax returns or census returns or even cotton statistics.

But there are no ^{similar} criminal penalties for people who

reveal the name of an intelligence officer or agent or an

intelligence secret. ^{unless they give it to a foreigner or intend} ~~I just think that's wrong.~~

I think it's just plain wrong for us not to protect our secrets better.

to injure the United States.

I am charged in the National Security Act with the pro-

tection of intelligence sources and methods from unauthor-

ized disclosure. But the only tool I have is ^{the} ~~A~~ secrecy

agreement ^{require} ~~that~~ we have our people ^{to} ~~A~~ sign as a condition of

employment. We have invoked this agreement against one of

^{We didn't censor his opinions or criticisms; we just tried to prevent him from revealing names of people and} ~~our ex-employees who wrote a book.~~ We are currently engaged

sensitive operation some still going on.

in a ~~battle~~ ^{the agreement he made.} civil action ~~in~~ in the courts to determine

whether we ~~really~~ ^{can} enforce it. ^{legislation} ~~I have made recommendations~~

tions that would make it possible for us to protect intel-

ligence secrets more effectively. ^{My} ~~These~~ recommendations

would apply only to those of us who voluntarily sign an

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agreement that gives us access to these secrets; *it would not impinge on First Amendment guarantees.*

Q Mr. Colby, can we get back to the question of the necessity for the United States to maintain a big secret intelligence operation in an era of detente?

A Yes -- I didn't fully reply to that. I feel it is essential to the protection of our country, not only ~~in the~~ *out* military ~~sense~~ *security* but also in the sense of *security* ~~protecting us~~ against the other ~~kinds of~~ *terrorism, local* problems we face overseas -- economic pressures, problems that can start in various parts of the world and eventually involve us. Through our intelligence work we ~~are able to~~ *must* anticipate these problems, *and take protective steps.* ~~For example,~~

I ~~if you~~ *we* don't know that another country is developing a particular threat, ~~you~~ *we* can be caught very badly off base.

Beyond that, our intelligence work makes it possible to engage in negotiations. The SALT agreement between U.S. and Russia ~~on nuclear arms limitation~~ is the most obvious example. Without the knowledge we had of Soviet weapons

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through our intelligence activities it would not have been possible for us to negotiate.

We also have what I would call a peacekeeping role, which I see of increasing importance in the years ahead.

On a number of occasions, we have seen situations developing in a dangerous manner. By alerting our Government in good time, it has been possible for it to defuse these situations.

Q What part do spy satellites and other forms of modern technology play in your work of collecting intelligence?

A Quite frankly, technical intelligence has revolutionized the intelligence business. You have seen the photographs that came out of the U-2 operation over Cuba.

~~We now have similar photos on many different areas of the world.~~ You can realize the great importance of this development if you think back to the great debate in 1960 about the missile gap. People took up strong positions on both sides and we at the CIA were trying to determine what really was happening -- whether a missile gap actually was opening

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up in favor of the Soviet Union. Today it would be impossible to have that debate because the facts are known.

~~They are right out there flat and very easy to see.~~

This kind of technical intelligence ~~has~~ made the SALT agreement possible. For years we insisted that any arms agreement would require inspection teams to monitor on the ground what the Russians were doing. Given their closed society, they wouldn't permit it. That stalled negotiations

Finally our "national technical means," as for years. Today we can make an agreement and I can tell

we ~~can~~ ~~tell~~ ~~the~~ ~~President~~ ~~and~~ ~~Congress~~ ~~that~~ ~~we~~ ~~can~~ ~~monitor~~ ~~it~~ ~~without~~ ~~on-site~~ ~~inspection~~ ~~teams~~, ~~and~~ ~~we~~ ~~could~~ ~~make~~ ~~the~~ ~~agreement~~.

Q Some people argue that these satellites and other forms

the 1972 SALT agreement

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of technical intelligence can do the whole job and that there is no longer any real need for clandestine agents ferreting out information. Do you agree with that?

A Not at all. ~~It's true that in closed societies, like the~~

~~Soviet Union~~ ^{and open observation} technical systems can tell us ~~to~~ a great ~~ex~~

^{deal of} ~~of~~ ^{physically there} ~~what is there~~ in closed societies. But they can't tell us what is going

to be there in three or four years' time because of deci-

sions that are being made in a board room ~~in Moscow~~ today.

They can't tell us the ^{internal} political dynamics ~~of a situation~~ ~~of a society~~

^{to} ~~and~~ allow us to assess how ^{such a society} ~~it~~ is changing. And they can't

tell us the intentions of people who may be bent on deceiv-

ing us. Intelligence of this sort can be obtained only

by what we call "clandestine collection."

Q Looking at Russia's intelligence operation -- the KGB --

how does it compare with ours in scale and effectiveness?

A I think Soviet intelligence is going through a change --

a good change. For years the big thrust was on stealing se-

crets. You remember the atom spies in America and

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all that sort of thing. ~~But~~ ^I in the past few years they ^{Soviets}
^{apparently} have become ~~more~~ aware of the significance of assessment --

the analysis function of intelligence. They've set up in
~~the United States, and some of our world problems~~
stitutes to study ~~us~~, realizing that the facts ~~really~~ are
^{Their real} easy to obtain in America. ~~The~~ problem is assessing what

we might do, which ~~in itself~~ is a terribly complicated and
difficult intelligence problem.

Q Are you suggesting that the KGB no longer maintains spies
in this country?

A Oh, they do -- sure, they do. What I am saying is that
they have moved from ^{heavy} ~~total~~ dependence on espionage to greater
^{more normal} reliance on ~~other sources and other~~ ways of collecting and

assessing intelligence. You can only say that's a change

for the good; ^{if should} ~~could~~ give them a more accurate picture
of us and it ^{could} hopefully reduce their espionage some day.

But the Soviets still run very extensive covert opera-
tions around the world. In any kind of foreign mission
they send abroad -- for example, delegations to international

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organizations -- there always will be KGB people or people from GRU, their military intelligence. They also conduct a long-term program of training people and putting them in place under false identities to stay for many years. Colonel Abel was an example of that. They have the benefit, of course, of indirect support from a variety of Communist parties around the world.

Q The Director of the FBI said the other day that there now are so many Soviet spies in America that he is having trouble trailing them. Why do we let so many in?

A We let them in as diplomats or in some other capacity. *commercial travellers*

You have to realize that there has been a very large increase in the number of Soviet citizens in the United States, as compared with 10 years ago -- partly ^{as} a result of detente.

Now, if you get an increase in Soviet citizens in this country you inevitably are going to get an increase in

Soviet agents because of the role that the intelligence

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~~apparatus plays in their society:~~

You see, in the Soviet Union the intelligence service is a very, very powerful institution because of its responsibilities for internal security as well as foreign intelligence. They have, in effect, merged the CIA ^{the} and FBI, ^{and our state police} And ^{forces.}

their intelligence service carries a very high degree of ^{preserving the power of the Soviet state, for} responsibility for party discipline and ^{for} public discipline.

Consequently, the KGB has ^{an} institutional power that is ~~quite~~

~~a lot stronger than ours. I'm glad to say that our domes-~~

~~tic influence is far weaker.~~

totally different

(END INTERVIEW)

*from the FBI and CIA combined in
or country. I think our system makes ^{us} a
better, and a stronger, ~~country~~ nation.*

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